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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GEORGETOWN 000539

SIPDIS
NOFORN
G/TIP - AMY ROFMAN
G
INL
DRL
PRM
WHA/PPC - SCOTT MILLER
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PASS TO AMEMBASSY GRENADA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/12/02
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [SMIG](#) [PREF](#) [ELAB](#) [KTIP](#) [KCRM](#) [KWMN](#) [KFRD](#) [GY](#)
SUBJECT: President Jagdeo Discusses Human Trafficking in Guyana

CLASSIFIED BY: Karen L. Williams, Charge d'affaires; REASON: 1.4(B),
(D)

¶1. (C) Summary. In an unexpected meeting with a visiting G/TIP Officer on November 24, President Bharatt Jagdeo said he views trafficking in persons as a serious matter and would like to see Guyana ranked higher than Tier 2 Watch list. He said there are three on-going cases to prosecute traffickers, but that he cannot "guarantee" a conviction to occur anytime soon. He cautioned against placing too much credence on anecdotal evidence and encouraged future visits by G/TIP to visit mining camp areas. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Background. Although G/TIP Officer Amy Rofman was scheduled to meet with Minister of Home Affairs Clement Rohee only, Rofman and PolChief met with both Minister Rohee and President Jagdeo on November 24 as both men were attending a two-day National Crime Prevention Conference. The November 23-24 G/TIP visit also involved high-level meetings with other senior GoG officials and several NGO representatives as well as a meeting with a community focal group in Charity on the East Coast of Guyana.

¶3. (C) President Jagdeo stated November 24 that while prostitution does occur, there are very few trafficking cases in Guyana with only three identified and that periodic alleged cases of trafficking reported in mining camps and Chinese restaurants do not meet the definition of trafficking but prostitution. He also emphasized that ranking Guyana Tier 2 based on the fact that Guyana has not had a trafficking conviction in recent years overlooks the positive actions that the GoG has taken to combat trafficking. He cited the establishment of a Child Protection and Care Agency and community focal groups as positive GoG actions towards combating trafficking. He also stated that he "would love to have traffickers languish in jail," but that he "cannot guarantee that the judiciary will move so quickly to prosecute a case." He stressed that there is a huge backlog of existing cases and that even a murder case in Guyana can take 10 years to complete.

¶4. (C) President Jagdeo said that he welcomes NGO involvement in the fight against trafficking, but that NGOs only have anecdotal evidence to provide. He cited the Guyana Human Rights Association as an example: it has only one full-time representative on the ground to examine trafficking and human rights issues. Therefore, Jagdeo cautioned against placing too much credence on NGOs with limited capacity and no documented evidence to base reports. He did, however, welcome evidence from NGOs and other organizations

that identifies victims of trafficking so that those cases can be brought to GoG attention for action. He ended the meeting by offering to make a public statement on combating trafficking in persons in hopes that such a statement would help move Guyana from Tier 2 Watch list to a higher ranking.

15. (C) Minister of Human Services and Social Security Priya Manikchand on November 23 said that the GoG is spending considerable resources to keep focal groups in operation. She emphasized that since 2004 the GoG has launched public awareness campaigns to address trafficking in persons. She said the 2009 TIP Report is not inaccurate, but that ranking Guyana Tier 2 Watch list because it does not have a recent conviction is not justified. "We have a problem on how you weigh things" and "you are dead wrong on this issue" she argued. Minister Manikchand acknowledged that there is a backlog of cases in the judicial system and that she herself would like to see a conviction, but that court cases are left to courts to decide. She argued that if the GoG is able to meet nine out of ten requirements in its effort to combat trafficking in persons but is punished for not being able to have a conviction, the problem lies not with GoG efforts, but the process through which Guyana is ranked in Washington.

16. (SBU) Meetings with representatives on November 23-24 from United Nations Children's Fund, U.S.-based NGO Catholic Relief Services and victim's assistance NGO Help and Shelter confirmed earlier reports that no broad-based, thorough surveys regarding trafficking exist in Guyana. We were told that Amerindian woman were most vulnerable, that trafficking likely occurs in mining camps and in Chinese restaurants along the East and West Coast, but

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representatives admitted that none of these reports were based on firsthand evidence. A focal group team we met in Charity on the East Coast of Guyana as well as NGO representatives pointed to judicial branch "malaise" and the backlog of court cases as a reason for lack of trafficking convictions.

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